

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

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old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

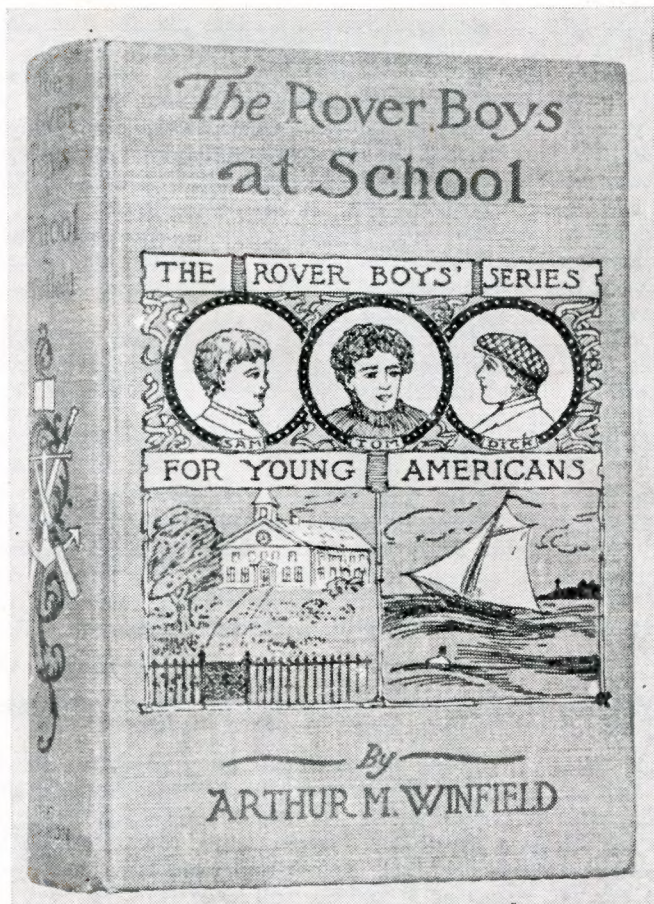
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Whole No. 557

The Publication History Of The Rover Boys

By William R. Gowen



First Rover Boys Series format used by Mershon.

The Publication History Of The Rover Boys

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The field of series book collecting often leads the researcher down blind alleys as he tries to reach the truth about how a certain series came into being, when and where it was published and in particular, how various editions evolved.

Of the larger series produced through the genius of Edward Stratemeyer early in this century, **The Famous Rover Boys Series for Young Americans** stands out, not only for its key role in establishing the foundation of what became The Stratemeyer Syndicate but because it helps illustrate the emerging state of mass-market juvenile fiction at the turn of the century.

Stratemeyer was already an established author of boys' fiction, having written and edited several series, not to mention serials and single books. The Rover Boys, written by his own hand under the pseudonym Arthur M. Winfield, came into being in 1899 and continued through 30 volumes, the last copy-righted in 1926.

But unlike later Stratemeyer Syndicate series like the **Tom Swift Series** and **Motor Boys** series, published in toto by Grosset & Dunlap and Cupples & Leon, respectively, The Rover Boys was published by several houses (all of them legally entwined) before Stratemeyer took the series to G & D in 1908. From that year through the next several decades, Grosset & Dunlap and Cupples & Leon published the bulk of the Syndicate's series books.

Any study of The Rover Boys Series must take into account the instability of the boys' book publishing trade at the turn of the century, in particular, pertaining to The Mershon Company and its successor firms.

According to Denis Rogers study of the publication of Edward S. Ellis stories (**Round-Up**, July-September 1973) The Mershon Company underwent upheaval during the 1905-1908 period.

William L. Mershon started publishing books in 1899 following the collapse of the Cassell Publishing Company. Mershon printed his books under his own name at a plant in Rahway, New Jersey and continued doing so as late as 1906 when he was still active with new partners, longtime colleague Charles H. Peck and the A. L. Chatterton Co. as the Chatterton-Peck Company.

Late in the period when The Mershon Company existed as a separate entity (1903 or 1904) William Mershon contracted with several other publishers for reprint rights to certain books, including titles in several boys' series. Among those companies was the great Philadelphia department store, John Wanamaker & Company. Rogers reports that Ellis titles were reprinted by Wanamaker, plus the George M. Hill Company and Thompson & Thomas of Chicago.

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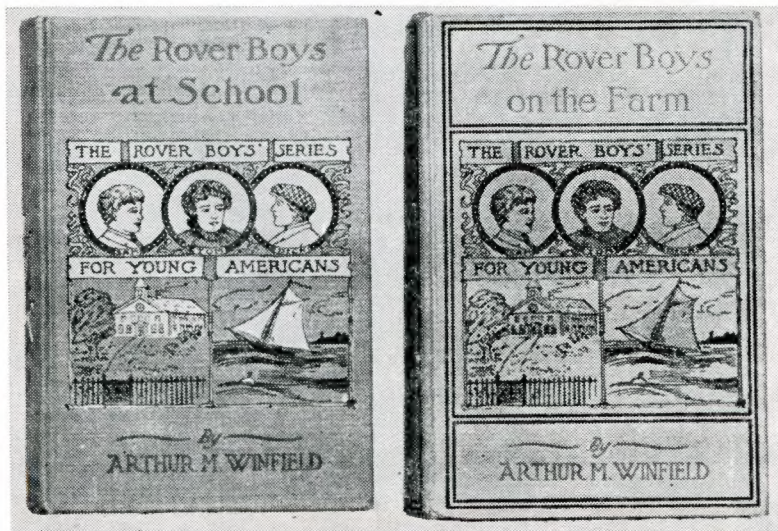
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The Wanamaker reprints are found in at least two cover formats, some Rover Boys titles (approximately five) included. In one type, the cover is medium to light green with boy's and girl's heads facing each other enclosed in a large black diamond on the cover front. There is a shield, like the faces in tan, enclosing the series title: "The Wanamaker Young People's Library." This shield, slightly altered, appears on the spine enclosing a book design. The front cover is enclosed in a one-eighth inch red border and there is a red stripe, the same width, at the top and bottom of the spine. The other Wanamaker format is a medium green cover of various shades with gold lettering on the spine and black lettering on the front. Ornamental scrollwork encloses waist-length portraits of a boy and girl, now facing the front. The "Young People's Library" logo does not appear on the cover of this format although the title page of some copies contains "Wanamaker Young People's Library."

William Mershon joined partnership in January 1905 with William M. Stitt Jr. and Joseph Scammell to form the Stitt Publishing Company. This agreement was much wider in scope than previous arrangements with firms like Wanamaker and George M. Hill. Rogers speculates that Mershon's age was a factor in his planned phase-out from the publishing business, starting with the forming of the Stitt company in 1905. The ease of the changeover from Mershon to Stitt is evidenced by the lack of design change in Rover Boys cover formats between the two publishing firms.

Stitt didn't survive long as a publisher as William Stitt left the struggling firm in February 1906 to pursue other business interests.

Eight months later William Mershon turned to one of his longtime Mershon Co. colleagues, Charles H. Peck, the pair joining with publisher A. L. Chatterton to form Chatterton-Peck, which occupied the Stitt offices at 156 Fifth Avenue in New York.



The Mershon design, left, was changed by Grosset & Dunlap by outlining the cover with parallel rules and changing the white highlights to gray. This G & D format, right, was in production about one year before the publisher completely revised the design in 1909.

In *The Publishers' Weekly* dated Oct. 13, 1906, William Mershon officially announced the accomplishment of this merger, arranged through the cooperation of technical trade publisher A. L. Chatterton.

Chatterton-Peck published the *Rover Boys* from late in 1906 through 1907, a period that covers one of the most interesting legal cases in boys' book publishing history.

Edward Stratemeyer had decided by 1907 to take his business to a larger



Evolution of the *Rover Boys* illustrated cover format, clockwise from upper left: Mershon format, repeated by Stitt and Chatterton-Peck; the 1908 revision by Grosset & Dunlap with ruled lines outlining the cover design; the 1909 G & D revision in medium-green cloth and with white title and author lettering; the dark brown G & D format with red title and author lettering.

publisher better able to handle the large volume of work planned for The Stratemeyer Syndicate in the years ahead. With his **Motor Boys** series proving successful at the large house, Cupples & Leon, he wanted to move several of his other properties to equally large and efficient houses.

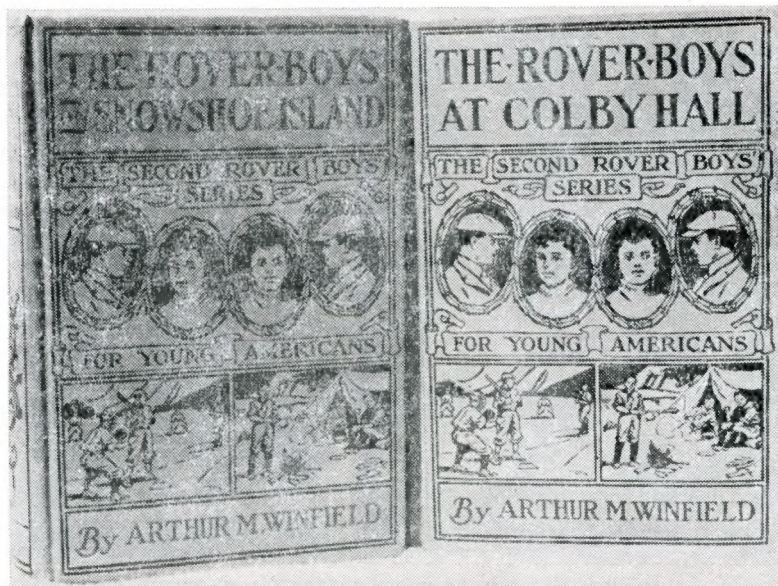
The Publishers' Weekly dated Jan. 4, 1908 contained an advertisement by Chatterton-Peck stating:

"It has been brought to our attention that **EDWARD L. STRATEMEYER** is attempting to negotiate with Publishers for the publication of one or more of the following series of books, to wit: The Frontier Series, Flag of Freedom Series and Lost in the Land of Ice by Capt. Ralph Bonehill; The Railroad Series by Allen Chapman; The Rise in Life Series by Horatio Alger Jr.; The Deep Sea Series by Roy Rockwood; The Rover Boys Series, The Putnam Hall Series and Bob The Photographer by Arthur M. Winfield.

"We hereby give notice to all Publishers that we claim the contract right to the exclusive publication of the books comprising said several series and we will resist, by all legal means, any effort on the part of said **STRATEMEYER** or any person to publish any of said books."

However, two months later lawyers for Stratemeyer and Chatterton-Peck settled the case out of court. In the March 7, 1908 issue of **The Publishers' Weekly**, an advertisement by Chatterton-Peck announced:

"... That the litigation that has been carried out since October, 1907, between Chatterton-Peck Company and Stitt Publishing Co., The Mershon Co., W. L. Mershon and Edward Stratemeyer, author of many books



Grosset & Dunlap's transitional cover format of 1917-1919, in which the first three titles of the Second Series were printed in the familiar medium-green cloth but with red, instead of white, title and author lettering. This format gave way to the dark brown binding late in 1919 with the brown in full production from 1920 until 1932. (Books courtesy of Maurice E. Owen)

we have been publishing, has been settled so far as Edward Stratemeyer was concerned, he having arranged for the purchase of all stock and publication rights to the following books:

(There follows in the advertisement series and individual titles, listed above, among which is the Rover Boys Series.)

In the same issue of *The Publishers' Weekly*, Grosset & Dunlap announces in a full-page advertisement that:

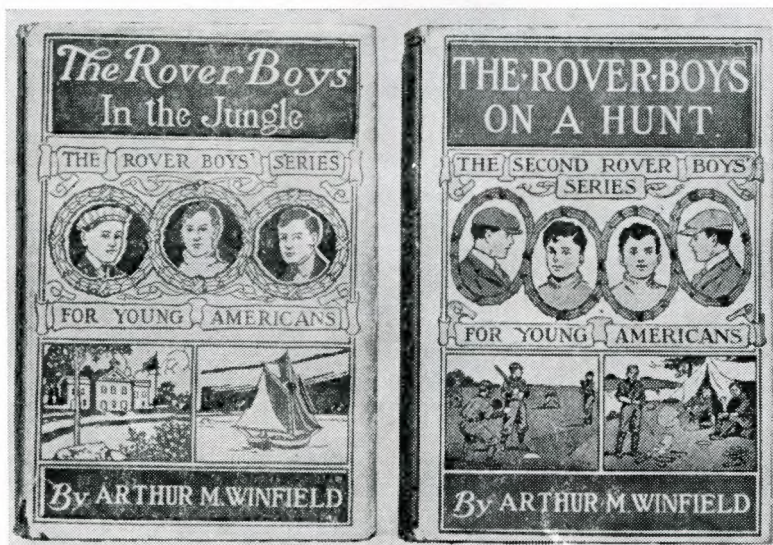
"We have just completed an arrangement with Mr. Edward Stratemeyer, owner of the plates and copyright, and the publishing house of Chatterton-Peck Co. whereby we have taken over the publication of the following well-known books:

(Listed are the first 11 titles of The Famous Rover Boys Series, the first two titles in The Putnam Hall Series, The Flag of Freedom Series, The Deep Sea Series, The Rise in Life Series, The Great Newspaper Series, The Frontier Series, The Railroad Series, The Dorothy Chester Series, The Bobbsey Twins Books and The Enterprise Series for Boys.)

This breakthrough with a mass-market publisher, following the 1906 introduction of The Motor Boys Series under the Cupples & Leon imprint, was the stroke that brought on the most prolific era in boys' series-type books as produced by The Stratemeyer Syndicate.

The smaller publishers were now for the most part out of the picture as The Stratemeyer Syndicate sent the vast majority of its production through the presses of G & D and C & L.

It should be noted that, probably as a result of the court settlement and the fact that Edward Stratemeyer himself authored The Rover Boys Series,



Dust jacket designs for the First Series, left, and the Second Series, right. Both were green and red on white paper, reproducing the design of the book cover. Jacket at left was a line drawing while that on right used a halftone screen on boys' portraits and camping and baseball scenes. These jackets were produced from 1909 until late 1920's, when four-color jacket was introduced.

these titles appeared from 1908 onward as copyrighted by Edward Stratemeyer, rather than Grosset & Dunlap. Thus the Stratemeyer copyright appears on titles Nos. 12 through 30. Even the first 11 titles were eventually to be re-copyrighted (containing a dual copyright) to Edward Stratemeyer.

The Rover Boys Series was one of the series produced in the early days of the Syndicate that traces its authorship to the typewriter of Stratemeyer himself rather than to contract writers. Arthur M. Winfield and Capt. Ralph Bonehill were two of the most well-known pseudonyms used by Edward Stratemeyer for his own creations.

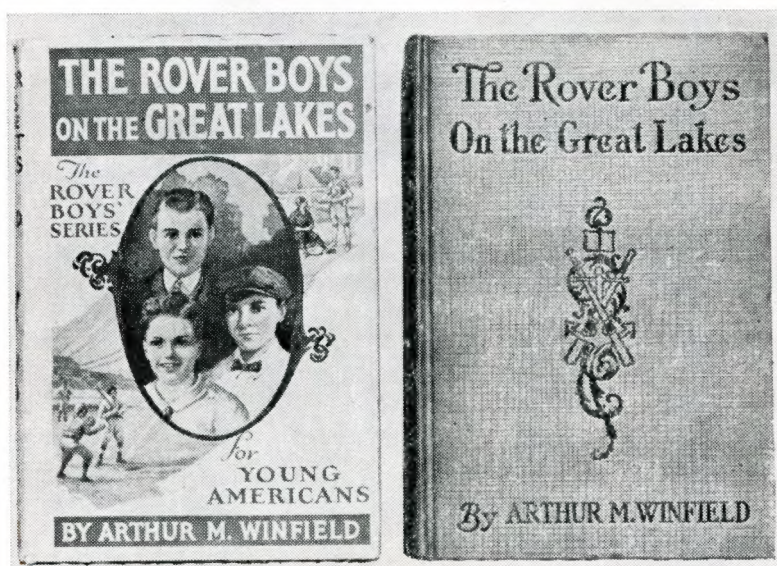
Denis Rogers has called The Mershon Company and its successors "The Mershon Complex." Never has a title been more appropriate; the Rover Boys Series illustrates this. For example, Chatterton-Peck titles known to have come out in 1906 and 1907 carry C-P copyrights dated 1905; Mershon remained on the copyright page after 1905 even though we know Stitt came into being that year; and formats were borrowed from other series. The Chatterton-Peck "Standard Library" edition described below is one example.

This was a very confusing time, one which was resolved when Edward Stratemeyer's lawyers found the way for him to take his rapidly-growing business to Grosset & Dunlap in 1908.

THE FORMATS:

Format 1—The Mershon Company:

The first eight titles in "The Rover Boys Series for Young Americans" were published by Mershon between 1899 and 1904, even though dates of copyright covering 1906 and 1907, respectively, appear for The Mershon Co. on titles Nos. 10 and 11, on the Plains and in Southern Waters. Stitt, we have

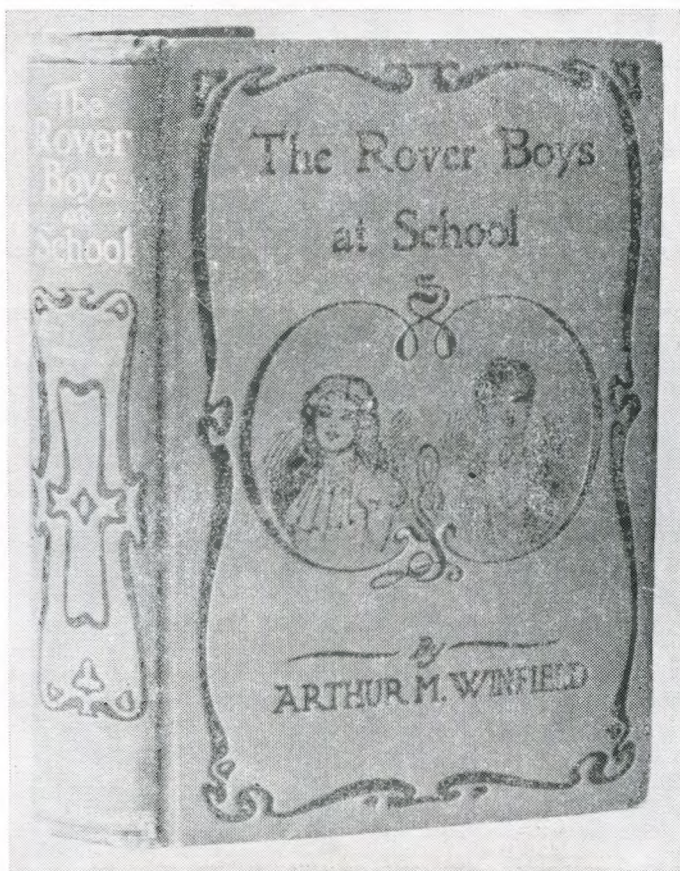


Dust jacket and book cover of Grosset & Dunlap's 1932 revision to a dark-orange format. Actually, this four-color dust jacket appeared on late production runs of the dark-brown format as well. The change to dark-orange binding was part of G & D's overall format change of nearly all its boys' series in 1932.

shown, came into existence in 1905, so that company's name appears on the copyright page for title No. 9, *on the River*, first published during that year, as well as the previous eight titles as reprinted in 1905. The reason Mershon was returned to the copyright page for titles 10 and 11 the following two years will be discussed later.

Description of Covers: Light green cloth was used for this format with the title and author lines on both the front cover and spine appearing in red lettering. The three Rover Boys, Sam, Tom and Dick, have their portraits on the front cover arranged horizontally in overlapping circles, which also contain their names. Above and below the circles, in black lettering on white background (a decorative streamer) is the series title: "The Rover Boys' Series for Young Americans." Under the circles, in square panels, are drawings of a schoolhouse and sailboat.

The spine has as its central design a scroll enveloping an anchor and crossed baseball bats, topped by an open book. The scroll is in black with the anchor,



An example of *The Rover Boys at School* as reprinted by the John Wanamaker department store shortly after the turn of the century. Wanamaker reprinted various Mershon boys' and girls' books in its "Young People's Library" series. (Book courtesy of John T. Dizer, Jr.)

bats and book in white, outlined by black.

The size of this format is slightly smaller (by one-eighth inch) than the standard-size boys' series books published by Grosset & Dunlap, for example.

There are four illustrations, a frontispiece and three interiors. The artists for volumes 1 through 6 are W. B. Bidge for the frontispiece and Stacey Burch for the interiors; volumes 7 and 8 are not signed; volumes 9 and 10 have A. B. Shute as the artist for all illustrations and the artist for volume 11 is Charles Nuttall.

First Editions? It has long been assumed that any Mershon edition in this series is a true "first edition." However, it is more and more evident that there was more than one printing of the first eight Rover Boys titles by Mershon between 1899 and 1904.

Although light green is the usual color of the Mershon bindings, variants have been found in dark blue and gray cloth. Also, the traditional green Mershon page edges are not present on this writer's copy of *The Rover Boys on the Ocean*.

So while any Mershon copy should be considered a "first format" copy, it is virtually impossible to ascertain that it is a true first edition because of Mershon's probable multiple production runs in the six-year period until Stitt took over in 1905.



Look twice! This copy of *The Rover Boys in the Jungle* from George Holmes' collection is bound in the **Second Series** format even though the title is from the **First Series**, the third title, overall, of the 30 in the full series.

Harry Hudson's bibliography states that the first 11 titles were published by Mershon. This is only true to a point. Although Mershon appears on the copyright page for titles Nos. 10-11 (on the Plains and in Southern Waters) the great majority of these books were published by Chatterton-Peck in print runs starting in the last two months of 1906.

When Stitt folded in February 1906 and William Mershon sought to reorganize the company, books printed between February and October 1906 reverted to a Mershon copyright. Also, "The Mershon Company" appeared on both title page and book spine. Therefore, title No. 10 came on the scene first in this binding; Bob Chenu has a copy in his collection. It is also possible that title No. 11 appears in this binding, although like No. 10, it would be rare, since when Chatterton-Peck began to do business in October 1906 (with William Mershon really in charge) the books had "Chatterton-Peck Company" printed on the title page, "C. P. Co." on the book spine but still retained their "Mershon Company" copyrights.

Format 2—Stitt Publishing Company:

Stitt reprinted the eight original Mershon titles with the exact cover design as described above. The first book added to the series (the only one, it so happened) was title No. 9, *The Rover Boys on the River*. This carried a Stitt copyright of 1905, thus confirming Rogers' research in respect to the founding of the Stitt Company in January of that year.

Format 3—The Mershon Company:

The short life of the Stitt Company meant that in the eight months during 1906 (February-October) before William Mershon could find new partners, he returned to doing the job under his own name on an interim basis. Thus, title No. 10, copyright 1906 (*The Rover Boys on the Plains*) was copyrighted and published by The Mershon Company. Title No. 11, copyrighted by Mershon in 1907, also may appear in Mershon binding but it is more likely that it first appeared in a Chatterton-Peck binding carrying a Mershon copyright. It is assumed that the first nine titles were reprinted by Mershon sometime during this eight-month "interim" period in 1906.

Format 4—Chatterton-Peck Company

The first 11 titles appeared in a Chatterton-Peck binding, starting in late 1906 and continuing through 1907. The cover designs were identical to the Mershon issues and the color remained light green. All 11 books carried "Chatterton-Peck Company" on the title page and "C. P. Co." on the book spine while titles Nos. 1 through 8, 10 and 11 were copyrighted by The Mershon Company and title No. 9 retained its Stitt copyright.

Format 5—Chatterton-Peck Company:

During the two years (1906-07) that *The Rover Boys Series* was published by Chatterton-Peck the books also were bound in that company's "Standard Library" editions.

The basic design of these books shows a front-cover scene with three young men in the foreground on a lakefront among trees and rocks. They appear to be looking for something, the boy in the foreground wearing a derby hat. The boys and rocks are colored in brown, outlined in black while the binding cloth is the same light green as the Mershon and Stitt formats.

The name of the author, Arthur M. Winfield, is in black, enclosed in a black-rule box at the bottom of the front cover. The title of the book is in red lettering in the sky area at the top of the cover. The inscription, "The Rover

Boys Series for Young Americans" occupies the space (in four lines) on the lower right front cover.

The spine carries the title and author in red lettering. Beneath it, in black, is a smaller (than the Mershon) floral scroll design. At the base of the spine, "C. P. Co." is printed in red.

While this version of the "Standard Library" edition is rare in itself for the Rover Boys Series, an even rarer version, in deep red cloth and gold-and-black lettering, also was printed.

The title of the book is in black letters on front and spine. The trees are also black while the boys and rocks are white. The floral scroll on the spine is gold as is the outline of the cover picture.

The copyright page for the "Standard Library" edition lists only nine titles, through ". . . on the River" (1905). In addenda to his bibliography put out by Harry Hudson he stated "This format definitely used for first five volumes, probably all eleven."

Hudson also speculated that because of the higher-quality binding, the red-white-gold version was probably the earlier of the two incarnations of the Rover Boys put out in the "Standard Library" editions by Chatterton-Peck.

Other books appearing in this binding include various boys' titles (mostly singles), including Edward Ellis stories in the Rogers collection and "Larry Hudson's Ambition" by James Otis (Kaler) in the Bob Chenu collection. These titles used a revised spine emblem while retaining the three boys among rocks motif for the cover front.

Format 6—Grosset & Dunlap:

After the settlement of the Chatterton-Peck lawsuit, Stratemeyer then took the Rover Boys to the famous New York house Grosset & Dunlap, which was destined to play a major role in the Stratemeyer Syndicate's production for more than 70 years, until 1979, when new titles released by the syndicate were taken to Simon and Schuster's subsidiary, Wanderer Books.

When Grosset & Dunlap first took over The Rover Boys, the first reprints were identical to the Mershon format, described above. The first 11 titles appeared in this format, which had limited distribution.

Format 7—Grosset & Dunlap:

When the rights to print The Rover Boys went to G & D the first thing that publisher did was reprint the initial 11 titles (above). When it came time, in 1908, to introduce the first title in the continuing series under its own aegis, G & D decided to change the cover design somewhat.

The first title appearing exclusively under the G & D imprint was **The Rover Boys on the Farm**, copyrighted 1908. The change in cover design for this title (and for the first 11 titles as reprinted) is as follows:

The three overlapping circles enclosing the heads of Sam, Tom and Dick Rover remain unchanged, as do the pictures of the schoolhouse and sailboat. However, the pictures, as well as the title and author inscriptions on both cover front and spine are now enclosed in black rules, double rules on the front and single rules on the spine.

The color scheme is different, too, with the backgrounds of the circles as well as the schoolhouse and sailboat now gray instead of white. Also gray instead of white are the anchor, book and crossed baseball bats of the spine-decoration. The title, author and publishers' colophon are still (as in the Mer-shon, et. al. designs) in red lettering.

The size of these books is now the full standard size rather than the slight-

ly under-size of the Mershon, Stitt and C-P formats. The binding cloth is a revised shade of green (a light olive-green) and the cloth is of a fine weave, very similar to my tan format No. 1 (fine tan) described for the "Tom Swift" series in **The Round-Up** in April 1979 (Vol. 48, No. 2, Whole No. 536).

The artist for volume No. 12 (**The Rover Boys on the Farm**) is Charles Nuttall, including the frontispiece and three interior illustrations.

It should be noted that these first two G & D formats are very scarce because they were in production only about a year (1908) with production runs split between the two formats.

Format 8—Grosset & Dunlap:

In 1909, Grosset & Dunlap, probably with the advice and consent of Edward Stratmeyer, decided to give The Rover Boys Series a complete revamping in cover design.

It is with the 1909 revision, starting with **The Rover Boys on Treasure Isle** and encompassing the first 12 titles as reprinted, that the famous medium-green cover came into existence.

The cloth was apparently unique to G & D of the period. It is of very fine weave and semi-glossy in nature.

The title of the volume and the author line appear in white lettering in this format as does the title, author and Grosset & Dunlap colophon on the spine. The ruled lines of Format 6 remain, only they now enclose revised artwork. The boys' heads are revised and the names of Sam, Tom and Dick are now absent. The circles now resemble wreaths of ivy and the schoolhouse and sailboat are re-drawn and enlarged. The series title, "The Rover Boys Series for Young Americans" remains, in black lettering, in approximately its former space above and below the three circles.

The background of the three circles as well as the sky behind the sailboat and school, as well as the American flag, are printed in deep orange. The anchor, book and crossed bats on the spine insignia are now orange.

This format ran through title number 20, **The Rover Boys on a Tour**, and as such brings to a close the First Series about Sam, Tom and Dick Rover. The next change came with the introduction of the Second Series of 10 books, which told of the adventures of the Rovers four sons: Jack, Andy, Randy and Fred.

Format 9—Grosset & Dunlap:

In 1917 Edward Stratmeyer conceived the Second Rover Boys Series for Young Americans, telling the tales of adventure of the original three boys' four sons. It was a clever way of keeping the series alive for another generation of readers without making it look dated.

The first three titles in the second series, overall numbers 21 through 23, appeared in the same green cloth as Format No. 7. However, the white lettering of the title and author was now changed to red and the backgrounds of the circles (now four, instead of three) were changed from orange to red, as was the spine color.

The two scenes below the circles were changed, the left one depicting a baseball game and the right one a tent and campfire.

It is believed that this was a transitional format, existing only for the years 1917, 1918 and 1919. Harry Hudson's Bibliography states that the four initial titles in the second series appeared in this format but he confirmed to me in correspondence that he had not personally seen the fourth title (overall No. 24, **The Rover Boys on a Hunt**) in this format. Neither has any other

collector of my acquaintance. If a member of the Brotherhood can personally verify that this title appears in this format I welcome correspondence.

Artist for volumes 13 and 14 remains Charles Nuttall, while Walter S. Rogers took over for Volumes 15-17, 19 and 20. Dick Richards was the artist for Volume 19 and Rogers resumed work with the three transitional volumes, Nos. 21 through 23. All these artists painted the frontispiece and three interior illustrations.

Format 10—Grosset & Dunlap:

With the publication of my *Tom Swift* study in 1979 it was believed that the binding changed from my "tan variation 1" to "tan variation 2" in 1918. Additional information, provided by Bob Sawyer, has proven that the change-over to the coarser tan variation was, in fact, in 1919 with the publication of *Tom Swift and his Air Scout*. (That title appeared both in variations 1 and 2).

This fits in with the change from medium-green to dark brown binding cloth by Grosset & Dunlap for The Rover Boys Series, which also happened in 1919 with the publication of "The Rover Boys Under Canvas" (overall title #23).

It is probable that the transitional format (No. 8, above) lasted partway into the 1919 publishing season, with the dark brown cover taking over, as well as all previous volumes as reprinted in this color cloth. This makes the green-with-red lettering version of . . . *Under Canvas* very rare indeed.

The dark brown covers are in coarse-grained cloth much like the *Tom Swift* "tan variation 2" that appeared between 1919 and 1931. It is logical to assume that when G & D made changes that those made in a given year affected, to some degree, the many various series under production at the time.

All 30 titles, encompassing the 20 volumes of the first series and 10 of the second, appeared in the dark brown binding. The lettering of the book title and author appears in red ink in this format and the other artwork, including four circles, baseball and camp scenes, are a darker brown ink. All background highlights on front and spine are in red. Walter S. Rogers remained the artist for Volumes 24 through 30.

Format 11—Grosset & Dunlap:

As discussed in my *Tom Swift* study (Round-Up, op. cit.), Grosset & Dunlap made a major change in the cover format of its boys' series books in 1932.

Undoubtedly influenced by the Great Depression, the publisher simplified all cover designs. For example, the *Tom Swift* series went from its familiar tan illustrated cover to a plain orange cover.

The Rover Boys series was also changed, going from its dark brown illustrated cover to a plain orange cover, a darker orange (almost red) than that used for the *Tom Swift* series, either plain or linen weave.

The lettering is entirely in black ink. The cover is plain with the exception of the long-familiar spine emblem of anchor, scroll, book and crossed baseball bats moved (in black ink) to the center of the front cover. Some printings omitted this emblem.

All 30 titles in the combined series (20 in the first series and 10 in the second series) were reprinted in this format from 1932 until the end of the "life" of the series later in the decade.

Format 12—Whitman Publishing Company:

As it did with other Syndicate series, Whitman secured reprint rights around 1940 to selected Rover Boys titles. The eight titles listed on the Whit-

man dust jackets as appearing in this format are . . . at School, . . . on the Ocean, . . . on Land and Sea, . . . in Camp, . . . on the Plains, . . . in Southern Waters, . . . on Treasure Isle, and . . . at College.

These editions were printed on cheaper paper, the covers were either cheap cloth or composition and some reprints were in a size slightly larger than the Grosset & Dunlap editions (by one-half inch in height and width). There are no illustrations.

Colors of covers are various, including dark bluish-green, light green, orange and dark brown.

DUST JACKETS:

Data on dust jackets for this series is unknown to this writer for the Mer-shon, Stitt and Chatterton-Peck editions. Any correspondence from readers would be greatly appreciated.

For the Grosset & Dunlap editions there were two basic types, one, used for the medium-green editions and continued into the dark brown format, which reproduced in green and red the cover of the book itself. The panels of the title and author lines on the jacket front were solid dark red with the titles in reverse (white). The Three circles for the first 20 volumes enclosed the boys' heads in green with a red background, the schoolhouse and sailboat were printed in green with the highlights (sky and flag) in red. The series title above and below the three circles is in green lettering.

The title, author and Grosset & Dunlap colophon on the spine are red, enclosed in green rules. The scroll is outlined in green with the bats, anchor and book in red.

This jacket was printed on both coated and uncoated paper, with listings of other titles in the series on the back cover and other information on the flaps. The writer has seen no copies with a catalog of books on the reverse side.

The jacket for the Second Series also duplicates the book cover design, this time the background of the four boys' heads and baseball and camp scenes using a halftone screen to blend more subtly the coloration of the illustrations. For example, it allowed the four boys' faces to be printed in pink and the ground of the baseball game and camp scene to be brown.

Late in the production run of the dark brown-covered format (G & D Format 9, above), the dust jacket was modernized, using a four-color printing process.

The heads of three boys (presumably Sam, Tom and Dick of the First Series) were enclosed in a large oval. Surrounding the oval at upper left was the title "The Rover Boys' Series" and at the lower right its completion, ". . . for Young Americans." At the upper right is a full-color camping scene and at lower left is a baseball game, also in full color.

The title of the book appears in reverse type (white) in a solid red rectangle at the top of the jacket front. The author name is in a smaller red rectangle at the bottom. The title, author and new G & D open-book colophon are printed in red on the spine while the ornamental scroll design has been modernized into four-color artwork. The anchor is blue, the crossed baseball bats brown and the scroll itself green.

This jacket was used for reprints of all 30 titles in the series, despite the discrepancy of three boys' heads depicted on the jacket for titles in the Second Series (overall, titles Nos. 21-30).

The four-color jacket appeared just prior to 1932 and was continued until the end of the series, including the entire run of dark-orange reprints. The

jacket contains on its reverse side a catalog of G & D series availabl.

The Whitman editions also had four-color dust jackets, the artwork somewhat more simple in design, each jacket showing a scene from the book it covered.

Advertisements of other Whitman series were printed on the back cover and flaps of the dust jackets.

* * *

Acknowledgements—

This article is dedicated to the memory of Harry K. Hudson, without whose tireless efforts toward research in the boys' book field over a period of many years we, as fellow collectors and researchers, would be indeed lost. My files are filled with letters of assistance and encouragement from Harry spanning a several-year period as I researched this article. Several of the new bits of information regarding The Rover Boys Series were published by Harry as addenda to his bibliography. All along the line, he encouraged me to try to uncover as much additional information as I could.

The author also wishes to thank gratefully the additional assistance and encouragement from my fellow members of The Brotherhood who wrote and prodded and encouraged (in alphabetical order): Bob Chenu, Jack Dizer, George Holmes and Bob Sawyer. When I finished my Tom Swift study three years ago, Jack wrote a note of congratulations and added a P.S. "Now for the Rover Boys!" Later, he wrote: "A study on the Rover Boys could be done but it would take some time."

Never have truer words been written. "Some time" turned out to be three years. I hope the time was well spent.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

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Mail subscription	448	447
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete
Edward T. LeBlanc, owner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Eddie:

David Soibelman's article on Frank Merriwell's 100th birthday is either too early or too late. I lean to the feeling that it is too late.

I can arrive at this decision from his own words. Indicating that Frank appeared on April 18, 1896, at the age of 16, it thus appears that Frank was born in 1880 (1896 minus 16 equals 1880). We are thus at present two years beyond his 100th birthday. In 1996 we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of his enrollment at Fardale Academy, of his battle with the mad dog, of his imprisonment in a tomb, etc., etc., but not of his birth!

We also wonder sometimes if his "double-shoot" pitch was similar to a spit-ball, legal then, but seemingly too unsanitary for our hero to utilize.

Bob Chenu

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